



SCRIPTURE

PRACTICING *Jesus*

SERMON
STUDY

11.10.2024

Leader Corner

Practicing Jesus

Scripture

2 Timothy 3:14-17

"For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12)." When was the last time you really enjoyed and craved time in Scripture? Recent studies show that 57.5% of all small group members read Scripture just a few times a week (17% of small group leaders reported reading scripture less than 1x/week). And yet, God's Word is one of the primary ways he communes and communicates with us about himself, his son Jesus, and the truth of this life. Jesus himself fully believed in the unique power and authority of Scripture. Scripture is used to reveal Jesus and his purposes, and the more we engage, the more we change. As we read and interact with Scripture, the Holy Spirit will be at work to reveal truth about God, His purposes, and His ways. The goal isn't a legalistic, "thump you over the head" with spiritual shaming. Rather, it's an encouragement to engage with Jesus through the intake of the Word. The big question is whether we are ready to know and experience the life-changing transformation that comes through a regular rhythm of Word intake.

Main Idea: Jesus reveals himself through His Word.

Main Practice: Experience a deeper joy and communion with Jesus through the daily intake of Scripture.

Main Teaching: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

A few more housekeeping items for this week:

- **Pro Tip:** Remember that the goal isn't to try harder with these practice, but to start where you are and to experience connection with Jesus through them.
- Leave time for the "with Practice" experience as well as the "Practice" portion of the Practicing Jesus Journal.
- As we approach the holiday season, there are some specific ways you and your group can serve and meet the needs of people around you. Contact the Small Groups Team for more information and suggestions.
- Begin talking with your group about some ideas for the Christmas Offering.

As You Begin Your Group Time:

What were some of the "highs and lows" from your training on Fasting? How could fasting become a more regular part of your apprenticeship with Jesus?

Connect with Prayer

Have someone pray the following over the group:

Almighty God, whose word is authority and power and whose way is love, grant unto us today clear minds, understanding hearts, and willing spirits so that we may wisely appropriate your word of truth. In the name of Jesus. Amen (A Guide to Prayer for Ministers)

with Praise

As a group listen and/or read the lyrics to "This We Know" by Vertical Worship

with Principle

“Scripture is the primary way we are transformed by the renewing of (our) mind. As we think God’s thoughts after him, we begin to develop the ‘mind of Christ.’” (Practicing the Way, page 186)

1. Review the “Learn” and “Listen” sections of your journal. What insights stood out from Sunday’s sermon?
2. Using a Bible app, read together 2 Timothy 3:14-17 in two or three different translations.
 - a. What instructions does Paul give Timothy in relation to Scripture?
 - b. How does Paul describe the authority and inspiration of Scripture?
 - c. What else is important to discuss from this passage?
3. Read Isaiah 55:6-13 and/or Psalm 119:105-112. Use the “5P” method to exploring and studying these passages.
 - a. *Pause*: Put away distractions and prepare to read God’s Word.
 - b. *Pore Over*: Read the selected passage out loud together. You may want to read various translations.
 - c. *Ponder*: Write and discuss truths, principles, and/or challenging statements you read.
 - d. *Pray*: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal and discern any behaviors or relationship issues based upon this passage.
 - e. *Plan*: In light of this Scripture, how will you/we obey and live this out?
4. What are your “go to” Scriptures in time of need or encouragement? Make a list as a group of any and all Scriptures and ask someone to distribute that list to the group.

with Practice

Remember, the goal is not to earn anything, especially not to check a box, but to experience a deeper joy of communion with Jesus through the daily intake of Scripture.

During your group time, **choose** a practice, **train** together, and then **write** in the “Practices” section of your journal.

Three Readings (Lectio Divina) - This practice involves training yourself (your household, your small group community) to read a passage three times. After each reading, there is a time of silence to pause and allow the word to permeate you in different ways. The more you train in this practice, the more enriching it becomes for your mind, heart, and soul.

- Choose a small portion of Scripture (ex: Psalm 1, 23, Matthew 11:25-30, Colossians 1:15-20).
- Read the passage once and reflect upon it for 2-3 minutes. What stood out during the reading?
- Read the passage again, this time more slowly and focusing on the word or phrase that stood out to you.
- Before the third reading, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind, and heart. Then read slowly. Pray through and journal anything that comes to mind.

Night and Day Prayers- This practice involves training yourself to end and begin each day with reading Scripture. Read and pray Psalm 4 at night and Psalm 5 in the morning for the entire week. During each reading, reflect on the following:

Psalm 4 - Evening Reflections. First, what are you thankful for as you close this day (vv.5-7)? How and where did you sense or see Jesus today? (Where was Jesus “smiling down upon you, or showing the light of his face upon you?”) Next, what were / are the day’s distresses and upsets that you need to bring and give to Jesus before you lie down and sleep (vv.1-4,8)?

Psalm 5 - Morning Reflections. What expectations do you have for this new day? What requests do you need to make (vv.1-3)? Share all these with Jesus. What do you need to entrust to God’s will for resolution (vv. 4-6, 9-10)? What do you need to give to Jesus for his leading and blessing today (vv. 11-12)?

*(Practices adapted from the “Art of Missional Spirituality,” Jeremy and Monica Chambers & “Spiritual Rhythms in Community,” Keith Meyer)

For Further Study

Memorization of Scripture is another way to train.

- Memorize Psalm 23 (or a different passage) by reading it morning, noon, and night over the next week.

Other Resources:

Practicing the Way, a 4 week study on Scripture (January 2025)- John Mark Comer